835 (formerly it was commonly five goats), as well as a dog which
684 serves as scapegoat, that is, the dog is supposed to take upon itself the disease with which the sinner is threatened by the cult spirit. If disease nonetheless occurs, medicines which are connected with the cults are prepared (see medicines for cult sicknesses, Vol. II, p. 36).

855 The modern, freer conception or -- among the Fang -- the
582 denial of the taboo against intercourse with blood relatives (in the Pangwe sense) disappears as soon as there is a question of marriage. Then the taboo is in force everywhere and without qualifications. /260/

836 Free intercourse between the young man and the girl is, in
583 many cases, only a shorter or longer testing period which, if the result of the "test" -- in this case a physical one, as contrasted to the spiritual one of which we spoke above -- is favorable, leads to marriage. If the girl is very much in love with her friend, to use a Pangwe expression, he can readily persuade her to follow him immediately to his village. Such an "abduction" is considered -- partly, at least -- to be sanctified by custom, even if the bride's family is usually not overjoyed at the practice. In such a case, the girl's father will set out the next day to demand the purchase price from his son-in-law. If the latter is able to pay him a part, say, half of this price, the matter is settled, and the balance is usually put on a buy-now-pay-later basis. If it turns out, however, that the "abducter" is a poor beggar or that his father does not want to produce the money, the bride is mercilessly taken away from him again even if she pours out streams of tears. You simply cannot get something for nothing. In the majority of cases, however, the girl will not agree to run away with her lover; instead she will demand that her suitor ask her father for her hand in marriage and first make a payment.

583 Every woman, young or old, has the same value. Nonetheless, the amount of the purchase price fluctuates greatly in accordance with general economic conditions. A woman is cheapest among the Jaunde and she is most expensive in the heart of Pangwe country. The price fluctuates between 200 and 750 marks in our money. On the average, one can assume a price of

583 between 500 and 600 marks in the south. Devaluation of the money, which has also taken place in Africa, has considerably raised the price in comparison to what it was formerly.

583 The purchase price cannot be paid in money (spear money) alone, in cattle alone, or in any specific type of goods alone; 436 instead, all the objects of exchange which are in circulation 435 must be represented. Thus, in 1906, for instance, the following things were paid for a woman in the Fang region:

6,000 spears	420. -- marks
12 rifles	120. -- marks
2 vats of powder . . .	4. -- marks
70 choppers	70. -- marks
2 sheep	50. -- marks
2 iron pots	8. -- marks
10 pieces of cloth . . .	40. -- marks
5 hats	10. -- marks
13 kettles of salt @ 2. -- marks	26. -- marks
2 knives	2. -- marks
2 packages of beads . .	2. -- marks
2 tobacco pipes . . .	--. 50 mark
2 packages of flints . .	--. 50 mark
1 hatful of buttons . .	--. 50 mark
	753. 50 marks /261/

Any existing illegitimate children go along with the marriage [848] bargain. In fact, the bridegroom has to pay 500 spears for a boy and 1,000 spears for a girl; incidentally, he is only too glad to do so, because each child means an addition to his wealth.

I shall not go into a discussion of the endless number of quar- 578 rels that arise on the occasion of a marriage, especially when 583 the entire purchase price is not paid at once. Nor shall I speak of the fact that the girl's father likes to steer his daughter, even if she is in love with another, into the hands of the man who can pay the most or the most readily. All this would lead too far afield.

606 If the girl stays in her parents house and if the payment of 583 the purchase price extends over weeks and months, the suitor has 584

583 sufficient time to get to know his future wife and her family.
584 He treats them with the greatest consideration, and for the mother-
606 in-law (nĭe-ngə̌n III, that is, the girl's mother) especially he has an enormous amount of respect. He is courtesy itself, bringing her presents, large and small, and from time to time killing a chicken or a sheep for her. In short, one could in all seriousness speak of a mother-in-law cult (see the love feast, Vol. II, p. 24). And above all: oson, oson, oson: shame, shame, and more shame. The son-in-law is unspeakably ashamed before the mother-in-law, and vice versa, she before him. This is especially true after the wedding when the good mother-in-law extends her modesty also to the members of the son-in-law's kin group. Like a thief she steals behind the dwellings into her daughter's house in order not to be seen, and -- who knows? -- perhaps in order not to give rise to mother-in-law jokes.

Riddle:

[539] nzĕ'n e bönsüe, e ne kaangă'
[524] Way of the lizards, it is (in the) reeds (Cyperus)

Solution:

nzĕ'n e bonĭ'ngə̌'n, e n' a
Way of the mother-in-law, it is on (the) stretch

fă'
behind the houses.

585 On the day when a man takes his young wife home, the village
535 celebrates with a sizable dance, for which all adorn themselves to
[302] the best of their ability and which the young wife, red from red wood dye, attends as guest of honor seated on a stool. On this occasion, the popping of blunderbusses may not be omitted, because it belongs to the festive music like our flourish of trumpets. The dancing and shooting last several days when a wealthy chief has acquired a new wife or if it is the first wife of a fellow villager. There is nothing strikingly special about any of this; the festivity simply involves a series of different /262/ dances (among which the dschama is particularly popular which are also customary on other occasions.

831
785 sun) -- or with elephant's meat, in which case the child is sup-
556 posed to become spiritually great and important, just as the ele-
[825] phant surpasses the other animals physically, or, finally, with the meat of the hedgehog -- the child is to get as many things as the hedgehog has quills (1).

[539] 1. A well-known proverb, to be intelligible, would have to be translated into Pangwe something like this: He is as full of stupidities as the hedgehog is full of quills.

785 Thus, the child becomes miăk. Its loincloth is taken off
831 and from now on -- be it male or female -- it must go about completely naked. Here is another significant fact regarding
[834] the moral-religious view of the Pangwe: clothing, that is, the
[291] covering of the sex organs, arose because the sense of shame (o-so-n) which started with the first sin (n-sŏ-m, root so), that is, sexual intercourse, demanded it. If the innocent state (ignorance of sexual matters) is artificially restored, clothing becomes unnecessary.

The miăk are generally respected. People are careful not to speak to them about sexual matters or to seduce the girls, especially since /270/ the protection which they are accorded by
[668] custom is effectively strengthened through the right of the father or the relatives to shoot down the seducer without further ado wherever they find him. Nowadays, however, the old customs have been somewhat relaxed; the miăk are not always what they ought to be.

Annulment of the chastity obligation takes place in the same solemn manner when the consecrated person is fully grown, in other words, not before the age of 20 years. In the case of the man, it is required that he prove himself the bravest in war or at least that he has shot an enemy (1). In the case of the girl, it is

[177] 1. Today, in the regions influenced by the Whites, this decree has had to be moderated.

● [583] required of the suitor that, contrary to the usual custom, he pay

785
93| the already higher marriage price in advance, down to the last
[583] little string of beads.

The ceremony itself proceeds as follows. A goat is killed, and its blood is mixed with medicines by the medicine man and rubbed onto the body of the miǎk. The medicines are made from shavings of bark from various trees and are supposed to cause sexual incapacity to be "stripped off"; the goat is chosen because, [825] in contrast to the chicken, it is the animal of evil, of the sexual drive. Finally, the medicine man solemnly declares that the person concerned has ceased to be a miǎk and is thus relieved of the obligation to abstain. Henceforth the erstwhile miǎk again wears a loincloth.

5. Deviant Forms of Sexual Intercourse

The Negro's strong sweat secretions, but chiefly a skin 839 disease -- Krokro /Ed., ?/ (metšǎn) -- appearing on the sex organs and between the buttocks, cause an itching irritation which among the Pangwe has led to the bad habit of constantly scratching the penis whenever time and opportunity are favorable, even when there is no itching as well as to relieving an itch. They do this by twirling the penis in a manner similar to that used in making fire with sticks. This is a sport practiced by boys and adults alike and is called a kīk e metšǎn or a wō'o (= wō.k) metšǎn, which simply means "to relieve the itching by scratching" (metšǎn means itching of any kind, Krokro being simply the most unpleasant form of itch). On this occasion, erection naturally takes place as a rule, although no orgasm follows, just as there was no intention of relieving sexual desire. Indirectly, on the other hand, this action passes into a form of real masturbation, likewise through twirling the penis (a sīk nkŭn) from which, however, orgasm does not always follow either. In certain regions among the Okak this nsi.e n-nkŭn (the noun) is prohibited (ekī); it is said that otherwise the person concerned will no longer be able to cohabit with women successfully. /271/

circumcision was public, and the woman to whom it was done underwent the gibes and insults of all the inhabitants.

The life of the young people is the same as that of the adults. The virginity of a woman is considered unimportant and the Fan have sexual relations from the time they are capable of cohabitation. When a young girl has a child, it belongs to her parents, from whom the child acquires wealth; there is no search for the father and the young girl keeps all the respect which she enjoyed. Young girls are free to give themselves to whomever they please. This very broad morality, however, has one important qualification in that there are, so to speak, no young girls, the little girls having been married off by their parents very early, sometimes even before their birth.

Marriage (alug). Men rarely marry before the age of twenty years, and usually later, because they do not have the means to pay the dowry for taking a wife.

Exogamy is always practiced because marriage between people of the same tribe is sterile. Marriage between cousins is forbidden up to the third generation and in general, marriage is forbidden between persons linked by any kind of kinship; in this case there is also prohibition of sexual relations. No penalty is prescribed for infraction, but the guilty ones will fall ill and their children, if they have any, will not live.

Occasionally there are instances when marriage between relatives is authorized, but only after the practitioner has removed the prohibition by the process [88] called abvule minsem. The practitioner goes to find some termite earth (ngurege), a plant (mekaga), and a vine (nyola dzik); the plant and vine are folded and placed in an etok (a container of banana leaves) full of water. The termite earth is placed on a nzum (see the description in the section on conception) and the etok is placed underneath. The two kinsmen who want to marry also stand underneath it, while the practitioner climbs onto the nzum, dips the leaves in the etok, and says, "nseme ose mi waga bo e wo ma va yüi" (I remove every prohibition that you have made). He hits the termite earth with the leaves and then takes the etok and pours the contents onto the heads of the two people from whom he is removing the prohibition. With the remainder, the man and woman each takes a washing.

A man who has not enough dowry but who finds a young girl eager to marry him may take her away in the night; when the parents come

583 to look for her, he gives them what he has in the way of money and goods, and the parents have to consent to the marriage by accepting this first payment. This practice is called abom.

584 This practice is exceptional, and the marriage proposal is generally made in a more conventional way. A man, having learned that there is a free woman in a neighboring tribe, a young girl or a repudiated wife, goes to the woman's parents and asks to see her. She comes [576] into the hut, sits down, and allows herself to be looked at. She does not speak if she has never been married, but she speaks if she is used to men; then she goes out after about an hour. Her brothers ask her opinion of the suitor and take the answer to the latter, who gives his opinion of the woman he has seen. This visit is called dzāga. If both agree to marry, they spend the night together; the man may leave in the morning without saying anything if the woman has not suited him and he does not wish to marry her. If it is the woman who is not satisfied, she asks her brothers to tell the suitor not to come back. In case of agreement, the suitor goes back several times for several days. The father of the woman fixes the amount of the dowry, and the suitor has to accept it.

586 If a married woman, not wishing to stay with her husband, goes off with another man, the latter pays the woman's parents the amount of the dowry which was paid by the former husband. This practice is fairly recent. In earlier times the former husband received the dowry of his successor directly or, if he refused it, it was a case of war unless another woman was given him in exchange.

583 595 Marriage is not considered final until the dowry has been paid in full by the husband. The amount is variable, currently about 1,500 or 2,000 francs, in money or in various goods. The woman leaves her tribe and goes to live with her husband. Her arrival at her new village is marked by celebrations. [89] She is accompanied by women who cry out "e e ke o o o ko"; these cries are called mekogo. The husband's mother recites to her the genealogy of her son; then the bride goes into her husband's hut where the women of her husband's family bring her food. She is confined here for a week, and this is the "good welcome to the bride," eyale mbom.

585 535 Two days after the arrival of the bride, there are songs and dances performed by women only: these are the bya bi mbom. The men play the tomtom and are spectators. This takes place near the husband's hut.

586 The day on which the woman is to come out of the hut, she is bathed
535 and anointed with an oil (mbon nzũi) and is seated on a stool placed in the middle of the village square. Other women sing and dance around her and give her a new name to represent a wish she has made.

There is no religious ceremony.

583 There also used to be a marriage by exchange of wives (mvole bunanga). With the mere consent of the women concerned, two men could exchange their wives. The parents of the wives did not interfere except to verify the amounts of the dowries and to make sure that the husband of the wife with the lesser dowry had fully paid the difference to the other.

593 The relations between married couples are simple: the man must
562 lodge his wife and clear the brush from the site where she will make her plantings; on the other hand, the wife owes absolute fidelity and obedience to her husband, who has the right to beat her. The woman has no authority in the household; she is hardly more respected than
[435] a domestic animal; she owns in her own right only the cooking utensils and the tools for planting and fishing, and does not have the right to own animals. Prohibition of sexual relations is rigidly observed during
[834] pregnancy, during lactation, and in the night preceding departure for the hunt, work at the forge, and various [other] tasks. If the prohibition were not observed, these tasks would be unsuccessful.

595 Polygamy is the present custom among the Fan. The first wife has authority over the others, who must obey her. She receives the largest share of everything and assigns household chores and field work. The husband sleeps with each of his wives for three days.

684 In adultery, only the wife is punished. She is beaten and her ac-
837 complice pays an indemnity to her husband. This indemnity amounts to a quarter of the dowry. The wife confesses her adultery only when forced to by a series of corporal punishments which range from blows to being tied to a tree full of ants (akokum).

586 Repudiation is accomplished without difficulty: the man sends back his wife and the dowry is repaid him. The causes for repudiation are repeated adultery, the death of a child as a result of adultery, laziness, practice of fetishism, and excessive surveillance of the husband; sterility is not a reason for [90] repudiation. The children stay with the husband, and the woman, once repudiated, may remarry.

601
608 Afénane (Oyem District) from July 12-
/ 19, 1948], Archives d'Oyem.

The relation between the mwanŏ-kal and the nya-nduma is about the same as that between son-in-law and father-in-law.

● 583 Such an assembly of facts is understandable only in terms of
608 the Fang principle regulating the circulation of bride prices. "The brother marries with his sister's bride price," nduma a luŭ nŏ biki kal. Within such a circuit, the establishment of a couple concerns not only [117] the two partners but also the sister of the husband who has indirectly "provided" the bride price making the marriage possible, and the brother of the wife who has indirectly "recovered" this same bride price in order to get married. This explains the bonds existing between the maternal [sic] nephew and
[601] uncle and also the rights which the paternal aunt (sôna) has, according to Curault, "over her brother's children, since it is thanks to the price of her sale that her brother was able to get married and consequently have children." In exceptional circumstances
608 614 this relationship is sufficiently active to allow the nephew to settle in the midst of the family grouping of the maternal uncle or of the husband of the paternal aunt. We have had occasion to observe the first case, which involved a change of clan affiliation. A man of Yèngwi birth left his grouping following a death of which he was suspected; having joined his maternal uncle with whom he settled down to live, where he was considered as an Esabâg (he was said to be ñna ayôg, entered into the clan).

601 The kinship terms in the Fang system are applied not only to a specific class of individuals but are often used in an extended manner. Ngwé may designate any maternal relative. Nya-nduma (literally, the mother's brother) is applied to certain maternal male relatives: maternal grandfather and his brothers, maternal uncles and their descendants (1), in fact, to all the men belonging

1. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., pp. 32 and 41.

to the nd'è bot of the maternal grandfather. Mwanŏ-kal implies

581 word abè meaning both the bond and those joined) imposing peace
585 and mutual assistance. In this way the two essential functions of the woman are revealed: she is an element of fecundity and a maker of peace and assistance. These are the elements on which traditional Fang society is based. Hence it is easy to understand the control exercised by the group by restricting freedom of choice of a spouse – through the medium of the head of the family, it seeks the alliance which will be of greatest advantage to it (3) – and by

> 3. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., "In the past the opinion of the interested parties mattered little. The request is made by the head of one family to the head of another family."

intervening when the flight or rape of the woman would compromise the equilibrium brought about by the marriage.

583 The method itself of marriage marks the development of a
584 series of exchanges between the two family groups it unites. With the first phase known as the "betrothal," dzâga, the young man acquires pre-eminence over the chosen girl. He has the right to live with her for several days, but his family must provide the "fiancée's"parents with the first presents and must lend assistance at the time of various undertakings (clearing undergrowth, building huts, hunting [123] or fishing expeditions). During this period the girl's father determines the amount of the bride price, "nswa. The second period corresponds to the payment of this bride price, which may be made at intervals, provided that the first payment be the largest. This often gives rise to arguments and palavers. On the other hand, the ǹkia ("he who has received the bride price") is obliged to bring compensation in the form of gifts, usually of animals, which are called mévalö. Finally, the third phase corresponds to the "handing over of the fiancée" and to her settlement in the midst of the family grouping of the young man. It involves the ceremony we have described. The woman, according to Largeau, becomes truly the wife (mônöga), and not merely the concubine, from the moment when she is able to cook for her husband after

583 584 "her mother has come and prepared with her the first meal." (1)

1. V. Largeau, op. cit., article: Épouser [Getting Married].

This final ceremony, as M. Leenhardt has noted in other areas, has the character of a "communal manducation"; (2) it concludes a

2. M. Leenhardt, "Cérémonie et sceau du mariage [Ceremony and Seal of Marriage]," Le Monde Non Chrétien, 15, 1950.

phase in which the ties born of reciprocity are strengthened by an intimate communion between the members of the allied groupings. Afterwards the exchanges continue in the form of visits, assistance, and reciprocal gifts, particularly at the birth of children, when the husband is obliged to give presents to his family-in-law. This reciprocity must have been more direct in olden times, for some Fang can remember when marriages were made by exchanging wives. A young Pahouin author, F. Meyé, writes that "cases of such marriages (called "bikour mêngong") are known "but are very rare. (3) In spite of the medium of the bride price, this reciprocity

3. Cf. François Méyé, "Pour la Jeunesse Fang [For Fang Youth], Journal A.E.F., July 25, 1948.

is manifested in a nonequivocal manner. The interminable process it involves, which led Dr. Cureau to compare the family-in-law to innumerable leeches, (4) nevertheless guarantees the durability

4. And to write: "There are ceaseless demands under the most bizarre pretexts, the fiancée's first menses, first conjugal cohabitation, first signs of pregnancy, childbirth ..." in Sociétés primitives, p. 117.

583 of the alliance. (5)
584

5. Cf., on the importance of these facts of reciprocity and their role in so-called primitive societies, the remarkable work of C. Levi-Strauss devoted to the study of Structures élémentaires de la Parenté [Elementary Structures of Kinship], Paris, 1949.

581 As it circulates, the bride price weaves a network of ties
583 between groupings which, without the obligation of exogamy, would
578 have lived as so many biological, economic, and political units
595 retired within themselves. [124] It compels co-operation; it creates zones of security in a country where, at a time of conquest, the economic competition is severe (as regards the best land for cultivation and hunting, and the trade centers and roads). In addition the double exogamy multiplies these abé bonds, and the specific recognition of the maternal kinship reinforces, as we have suggested, these bonds, The circulation of women and in a parallel direction that of the bride prices have to be minutely regulated. This function belongs to the head of the nd'è bòt, to the ntòl, the latter signifying not only "ancient" but also "arbiter, envoy, ambassador." He is custodian of wealth and giver of women. At the level of the segment of brothers (bobèñâg), the principle that bride prices received at the time of the marriage of daughters are used to marry the sons in the order of their birth is completed by the obligation of the eldest brother to contribute to the formation of a bride price necessary for the marriage of the younger brother who does not benefit by such a compensation. Certainly this principle which was meant to regulate the distribution of the women and to limit competition has not turned out to be infallible. Antagonisms between the "eldest" [brothers] and younger brothers leading to the breaking up of groupings are often explained by this obligation not being met. (1) The oldest men can take advantage of their pre-

1. Cf. supra, pp. 112-113.

eminence in order to buy up the greatest number of wives. Finally,

581 the younger brothers are often tempted to collect for themselves
583 the elements of a bride price or to carry out rapes or raids. They
578 represent the most dynamic and mobile fraction of the grouping. (2)
595

> 2. Probably their lineages represent the major part of the Fang population of Lower Gabon. This would help to explain, apart from "modernist" reasons, the more or less pronounced rivalry and antagonisms between the "Fang from above" and the "Fang from below."

However, the earliest observations show that there was a sort of limited polygamy. Fourneau writes: "The Pahouin is in fact most often monogamous, simply because the woman is very highly prices," (3) and Dr. Cureau more specifically states: "Among the

> 3. A. Fourneau, op. cit., p. 77.

Fang where a wife is expensive, the maximum rarely goes above five; apparently thirty years ago, only the very rich could rise to one or two units above humiliating monogamy." (4) These two

> 4. Dr. A. Cureau, op. cit., p. 119.

authors confirm the existence of a restricted polygamy and therefore of a tendency to equalize the distribution of the women which, according to them, is allied with the high cost of bride prices.

583 [125] It is now time to analyze the material nature of the bride price. During the nineteenth century it consisted essentially of iron objects (representations of assagais, Pahouin knives, and axes very reduced in size), of which the bikki are the best known, (1)

> 1. Cf. M.H. Kingsley, op. cit.; the ancient word for bride price is bikki, or nswa bikki.

reserved exclusively for matrimonial exchanges, and of animals,

583 ivory, and salt. With the growing development of trade, imported "goods" took the place in part of these symbolic objects, and the explorer Du Chaillu about 1860 notes "an ever increasing desire" for these articles. (2) Then, until 1918-20, the bride price consisted essentially of symbolic money and "goods" of high value. It has only been since that date that currency is used and represents an increasingly large proportion of the bride price. This evolution must be looked upon in the first place as a desire to maintain as the equivalent of woman, who is wealth in the highest sense of the word, the most valuable property which Fang society has at its disposal. The society endeavors to have the bride price consist of scarce products: that is, bikki, "goods," in the period of trading; currency when the latter became widespread and accepted by the villagers. This corresponds originally less to a notion of high price — the notion of price only slowly supplanting that of exchange — than to the desire to establish a restricted circuit in which only the heads of family groupings would participate, that is, a circuit controlled to the maximum. (3) Under these conditions polygamy, which was not

2. Stating in another connection: "... copper rings, white beads, and copper dishes called "neptunes" have the highest current value among the Fang for the purchase of a wife...," cf. Voyages et Aventures dans l'Afriques Equatoriale [Travels and Adventures in Equatorial Africa].

3. The effectiveness of this control is pointed out in a study, Le Mariage Fang [Fang Marriage] appearing in the Archives of Oyem": Formerly the authority of the head of the family was very great and often he made use of family solidarity to allow the poorest to marry each other and to obtain a just distribution of the women."

583 common, appears as the sign of exceptional success, which explains the prestige of the nkukuma who owns a greater number of wives and more property (bium). The price characteristic manifested now in the bride price is a recent transformation. Originally, its final payment sealed an alliance that could not be broken without a long process of "divorce"; one which survived even the man who enabled it to be, since the wife was transferred to the eldest son or the oldest brother; and one which, above all, legitimized the ownership of posterity: if the bride price was not paid in full, the newborn child belonged to the parents of the wife; if not fully paid back [126] at the time of a "divorce," the child belonged to the father. The fact that the bride price is not refunded at the death of the wife, when the latter leaves posterity, does not suggest that it is a matter of the price of the latter, but rather a reciprocity emphasizing that through the posterity the alliance has become a kinship.

562 584 We have thus endeavored to show the social importance of marriage, pointing out particularly the fundamental role of the links it establishes between groups and the pre-eminence attached to controlling the circulation of the women and their bride prices. But obviously this system does not always function smoothly. A lack of equilibrium exists between the meaning it has for the grouping and the meaning it might have for the individuals concerned. Certain rules of procedure, recognized by custom, provide solutions for possible conflicts. The marriage agreed to by the young people may take place against the wish of the family heads following the rape (abòm) of the girl (1); the wife has various methods [839]

1. Cf. E. Trezenem, op. cit., p. 88: "The young man gives what he has in money and goods, and the parents are obliged to agree to the marriage by accepting this first payment."

of recourse against a seriously prejudicial union. Her complaint may result in her marriage to another of the sons of her father-in-law, or else she may go to a man of her choice who pays the

they belong to another clan. This is merely the application of exogamy to the maternal line and is less observed than the other rule of exogamy.

Having established this, we may distinguish several forms of marriage—Bertaut counts seven—or, on the contrary, consider them all to be derived from "regular marriage," mfañ aluk (from fañ = to do well, correctly, and luk = to marry). This kind of marriage is based on the payment of the "bride price," nsuba, nowadays essentially monetary and giving rise to abuses that have often been described, but in former times it was ritual in character, at least partially so (a century ago there was already a commercial element). The "bride price" of the past included local products (ivory, cattle) (1), imported merchandise (biôm), especially loincloths, guns and

1. The bride-price sheep, bikiga or bityiga, up to seven, which were in theory bred with a special view to payment of the nsuba and were sacrificed at the time of the marriage.

ammunition, salt, trade alcohol, and, finally, a special iron currency in the form of flat arrowheads tied into bundles (bityé, biki; bikpwelé; the unit of count being the bundle, akutu bikpwelé). The last was used only for ritual or magical purposes (2). There are reasons for

2. There is a prohibition against making them; all those to be seen look old.

believing that the composition of bride prices in local products and merchandise varied according to clan structure, the affiliation of the spouses, and the marriages previously concluded by the group. Nothing of this survives today, and the bride price has become a bargaining, at times pretty sordid, even a real /52/ auction, with the bride often the first to boast of the high price she has obtained in the marriage market.

Marriage not long ago was, and still in a measure remains, a group affair, the concern of the two meyoñ and two menda me bôt involved, which is discussed between the head of the young man's family and the guardian responsible for the future wife, nya ndômô, "true brother," that is, an ascendant paternal relative or paternal

584 uncle, a full brother or a half brother on the father's side. The custom persists in the better families, even if the future spouses' consent is asked or if the initiative for the union comes from them. When this is impossible, for instance among emigrants, it is still the correct thing for the prospective husband to use the offices of an older person, perhaps even an administrative superior, who arranges the marriage, kômesan aluk. To the nsuba proper are added customary presents to the future mother-in-law and affinal family, which are the more important when payment of the nsuba is in periodic installments (as it more and more tends to be). After the first installment is paid, there is a bethrothal, and the young girl, who before that has enjoyed sexual freedom, is from now on theoretically supposed to be faithful. Sexual relations with the prospective husband often begin at this time, if they have not already. The Christian ceremony and the civil registry take place when a portion of the bride price, amounting to from a quarter to a half, has been paid. In former times the bride used to remain in seclusion before going in procession from her village, where the groom's family came to fetch her, to her conjugal residence. After consummation of the marriage, she would with her mother's help cook the first meal served to her husband. These practices have fallen into general disuse.

Up to a recent date, on the other hand, the custom persisted—now prohibited officially—of "paying bride price" for a girl who had not reached puberty, even for a fetus or an unconceived child, who would go to live with her affinal family almost as soon as she was weaned, there to be brought up either by her mother-in-law or by her husband's first wife, whom she would look upon as her ntyi (mother-in-law). The marriage would be consummated after the girl's second menstruation (ayene ngon = to see the moon).

583 The mfañ aluk form of marriage is the most usual nowadays. It leads to many lawsuits in connection with deciding who is to be the nya ndômô to collect the "bride price." As the ntôl môt's authority has weakened, especially when he is not the girl's real father /sic/, uncles and brothers quarrel over who is to receive the nsuba. Some emancipated young women, particularly those who are mistresses of Europeans, decide the matter by collecting it themselves, but this is very much frowned on.

586 The "bride price" is given back to the husband in the case of divorce, to the fiancé in the case of a broken betrothal, caused, for example, by the premature death of the fiancée.

583 example, by the premature death of the fiancée. Almost all customary courts now refuse /to uphold/ repayment when a woman has died without issue, as was the old custom.

The other forms of marriage were abom, marriage by abduction, which was regularized by later payment of the "bride price" (meso ngon = arrival of the girl); putting in pawn for debt, which was made permanent /53/ by nonrepayment; éjian, substitution for a fiancée deceased before marriage or for a wife who died without issue (in such cases a younger sister of the dead woman was often provided); taff abim, corpse price, that is, the giving in payment of a young woman as blood money after a homicide; exchange of women between clans, usually on the occasion of an alliance /i.e. through marriage/, élat (1).

1. Elat = alliance, agreement; bilelat = kindred, the whole body of relatives and affinal kin.

837 Exchange or loan of women, mvia, was perhaps a form of hospitable prostitution. It apparently did not apply to the benya binga, the "true wives," in any case never to the ôsua minga, the first wife, who would have considered it a reason for divorce without repayment of bride price. In the same way, nkuan, sale, was not the equivalent of marriage and must have applied mainly to foreigners, though perhaps sometimes to Pahouin girls pawned and not redeemed.

587 428 The inheritance of widows did not automatically have the same value as marriage. It was usually permitted only between succeeding generations—from father to son, from elder to younger brother; inheriting by an older from a younger brother appears in recent law. Furthermore, the heir possessed the right of renunciation, except with respect to his mother, whom he had to support but whom he would naturally not make his wife. He could send other widows back to their families, keeping their children, who belonged to his clan.

587 583 To require repayment of the bride price for a widow's "liberation" seems to be a recent deviation; in the past this custom must have applied only to barren women or to those whose children had not lived, but only when they returned to live with their families without remarrying. The moment a widow remarried outside the family of her deceased husband, the "bride price" went to the latter's heirs, and

the law has not changed on this point. "No bride price, no marriage" —Sa nsuba, ve alu' e se kik. We shall find this principle again in connection with legitimate descent.

Thus it is the absence of payment of the nsuba that gives their character to free union, ébon, and to adultery, mejian, and makes them really infringements upon the law of property, justifying the fact that customary courts logically refuse to impose a penalty in a case of ébon when the girl returns to her family pregnant (2).

2. This is hard for some magistrates to understand.

A husband must provide his wife with lodging and clothes and must clothe any children he has by her. He must clear the field she will cultivate, provide her with household utensils and, in theory, with meat. He must allow her to visit her parents, to whom he owes respect. He must not use sorcery (3) against her and must respect the

3. Likened to sorcery are fellatio and sodomy, the grounds for numerous divorces from former members of native infantry regiments.

prerogatives of rank that she holds among her co-wives; he is supposed to sleep with her when she is not menstruating nor pregnant nor nursing. He must not beat her beyond what she can stand nor expose her vulva in public. /54/

A woman owes obedience to her husband, to her mother-in-law, and to the first wife, respect to her affinal relatives, therefore to her husband's clan; she must be faithful to her husband and perform her conjugal duty. She is responsible for cultivating the plots cleared for her, for fishing with weirs, for feeding her children, taking her turn at cooking for her husband, for keeping her hut clean and that of her husband when she is sleeping with him, and for helping to build them (it is she who applies the banco onto the frame). She does not have to take care of imported household equipment and clothes because these are biôm of a masculine nature (but the schools and missions are trying to train women to do so). Finally, and above all, she must be prolific: this is her first duty and a great deal will be forgiven her if she performs it.

3. Marriage

119 I do not know of any truly totemic act among the com-
562 plicated religious rites connected with marriage. This absence
583 must come from the fact that women are considered to be in themselves independent of the totem.

584 Before marriage, especially before starting to make the
119 rounds of the villages in order to pick out a future companion, a young man first builds a sort of triumphal arch in front of his hut. A creeper decorated with various bits of cheap finery, fabric, green leaves, flowering branches, and ava flowers, is stretched from his house to the one opposite, on the other side of the public square or the main street of the village. Before his hut two shrubs garnished in similar fashion have their tops bound together to form a triumphal arch. The young man opens the biéri box, removes his family totem and a skull and puts them before the statue of the biéri. Then for hours, endless songs and dances will be performed. When the young man is exhausted, one of his friends takes over. The songs and dances last far into the night and start again at dawn. No one may interrupt or even enter the hut, otherwise the entire ceremony would have to be begun all over again. A woman's glance at the biéri or totem, or that of a strange man, would be enough to bring this about. Therefore, one of the young man's friends is constantly on guard to prevent such an accident; he stands in front of the hut door and sees to it that people move along briskly.

[583] This rite only takes place when a youth is contemplating marriage by abduction. He wishes in this manner to gain the good will of the biéri, the ancestors, and the totem.

On the third day in the evening the ritual dances end.
[582] The young man immediately offers a final sacrifice, usually of a cock, a hen, and some maize, following the prescribed forms. Then, since he is not permitted to rest for even a moment, he starts out, carrying the cock, hen, and maize as his only provisions; he is not allowed to take along anything else.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

gourd mentioned above). They put oil in it. They keep it hidden. No one else is allowed to see it. 832

When the woman cooks food for her husband, she takes the medicine, which she puts in the neck of the gourd, and puts it in her husband's food, then his heart is changed. In the evening the woman smears herself with the *abatoŋ*, which she had put in the small gourd. When she and her husband lie down, if she touches her husband, the medicine which she has eaten makes his heart change. Though he liked her before, now he loves her on account of the *biang-abationg*.

This is the *Biang-abationg*.

Biang-mikal (adultery medicine).—People go and scrape medicine in the bush. If they come with the medicine, they put it in the pot. They put water in the pot. They go and catch a fowl. They cut the fowl's neck; they put the blood in the medicine with the scrapings from trees. They take medicine that is in the water, they pour it on the person's head. They also take a certain medicine called *ngwela* and rub it on the face of the sick person. They again rub it on his belly. Then they have cured the person of the *minkal*. The fowl used is not to be eaten by the sick person, others may do so. Then he is healed. 837 755 695

This is the same medicine used to detect adultery. If a person commits adultery with another man's wife, and then speaks a lie denying the affair, the person accused must drink the *biang-mikal* to show the people he is innocent. If he is guilty the medicine makes him sick, and he dies or trouble comes to his people. If guilty, medicine is made to call the curse back. 837 795

This is the *Biang-mikal*.

Biang-adona (medicine for young men, eloping medicine).—If a person goes on a journey and sees a virgin, he courts or loves her. Then the virgin accepts him. He and she go and lie down. The young man says, "Let us go in my town." If the virgin does not accept, then the young man tries to persuade her. The virgin says, "I go later." The young man says, "If you go later, give me hair for a souvenir." Then the virgin scratches over her heart. She takes the hair of her head and the blood from the scratch over her heart and gives it to the young man. He goes to his town, he says, "I'll first make medicine." He takes the hair and the blood. He takes a small piece of witch medicine. He also takes plenty of leaves. He puts the small piece of witch medicine with the leaves. The hair and the blood he also puts in the leaves. He mixes all in the leaves. He hangs them in the *bieti* basket. He says, "*Bieti*, I want to marry a woman. Take her for me." This eloping medicine hangs one day. In the morning he cuts medicine and puts it on top of a tree. He leaves the medicine on top of the tree. He goes again to the young virgin. He says, "I have come, I come to take you." The young virgin says, "I will go to-morrow." He sleeps. The young man when day breaks says, "Let us go." The young virgin says, "I will surely go." Then the young man elopes with the young virgin; he comes with her to his town. Father of the young virgin he comes vexed. The young man kills a goat for the father of the young virgin. They finish eating the goat. He (the father) sleeps one day. Next morning the young man 584 132 583

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

832 584 583 gives him (the father) the *beki* (dowry). The father of the young virgin takes the goods to his town; the young man remains in possession of the woman.

They marry with *biang-ndoma*, eloping medicine thus.

This is *Biang-ndoma*.

721 789 *Biang-akong* (war medicine).—Told me by Fam-deu, a Fang, Esisis clan, at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 19th, 1898. This *biang* was illustrated to me; a leopard tooth is the *Biang-akong*.

Make a bowl of war medicine, of leaves, roots, and bark. Call all people of the town. Drop the leopard tooth into the medicine. If the point of the tooth *looks* toward the people we have a palaver (trouble) with, then we must go and fight and we will win. If the root of the tooth points toward the people we have a palaver with, then we must *tabe si* (sit down) or our enemies will win if we go to fight them.

This is the *Biang-akong*.

789 619 622 *Biang-akumayong*.—This *biang* is the protector of the tribe or nation (*apóng*, tribe).

Told me by Esôya-ôvum, the headman of Foulabifong on the Nkomo river, who sold me the complete set of the *Biang-akumayong* belonging to the dead headman "Commisan." I present this *biang* for your inspection this evening. The tin canister was obtained from a white man and is used in place of the usual basket to carry bones in. It contains portions of the skull of an albino (male), portions of the skull of a *mon ngwri*, young chimpanzee, red powder and a variety of native medicine.

[726] [534] This *biang-akumayong* is always carried by the headman of a town during war.

A bell hangs from the bottom of the canister containing the bones; it rings when the headman walks.

Nlo.—The small horn belonging to the *biang-akumayong* has *ngom* (porcupine tail) in it, also native medicine. It is used to cure people having witches. A bowl of medicine is made. The *ngom* is dipped in the medicine bowl and the sick person sprinkled with the medicine. Then the witch departs.

At this point the headman Esôya stopped talking. He said, "The children who have gathered around your house must go away; no real man dare talk about the *biang-akumayong* before women and children." I told the children to go and Esôya continued.

The whistle.—This is part of the *biang-akumayong*; it has been cooked (boiled) in the medicine bowl and has great power when used by the headman in calling the men together after a fight.

789 619 *Mou*!—This is the large horn with a piece of looking glass on top. This horn contains much medicine, and next to the bones is the most important part of the *biang-akumayong*.

The two small antelope horns, and the small bundles of medicine, are *biang e sali* (hiding medicine); it makes the person carrying the *biang-akumayong* invisible to the enemy.